



S T O W M A R K E T

U R B A N D I S T R I C T C O U N C I L

ANNUAL REPORT

of the

M E D I C A L O F F I C I E R O F H E A L T H

KATHLEEN H. HARDING, M.D., D.P.H., M.F.C.M., A.K.C.

for the year

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STOWMARKET URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL - 1972

Chairman: D. H. Hopgood, Esq.
Vice-Chairman: R. W. Hiron, Esq.

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PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE - 1972

Chairman: R. W. Hiron, Esq.
Vice-Chairman: C. G. Soames, Esq., O.B.E.

The Whole Council

STAFF OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT - 1972

Dr. Kathleen M. Harding, M.D., D.P.H., M.F.C.M., A.K.C.
L. W. Brown, Esq., M.R.S.H., M.A.P.H.I.
Miss V. J. L. Green

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STOWMARKET URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council Offices,
Ipswich Road,
STOWMARKET,
Suffolk.

November, 1973.

To the Chairman and Members of the
STOWMARKET URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Mr. Chairman, Madam and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present the Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health for 1972.

The Standardised (as locally adjusted) Birth Rate was slightly lower than the National Rate.

The Stillbirth Rate and the Infant Mortality Rate were both considerably below the National Rates. This is very satisfactory and is a reflection of a high standard of medical and nursing care.

The locally adjusted Death Rate 9.3 per 1,000 population is less than the National Rate of 12.1.

In the table of causes of death on page 4 there is an increase in the number of persons dying from Ischaemic heart disease (Coronary Thrombosis). There are no other significant changes from the previous year.

There was an excess of 28 births over deaths.

Until recently the word "Epidemic" was always understood as referring to the numerous outbreaks of notifiable infectious diseases such as Diphtheria, Scarlet Fever, Typhoid Fever. Nowadays, we are faced with a new kind of epidemic in which the disease in question is not spread from person to person by germs, but is brought about by various factors, some known and others as yet unknown. One such epidemic disease is Coronary Thrombosis. In 1972 in England and Wales, this disease killed 105,962 persons. The cause of this condition is not yet fully understood. It is known to be a disease of highly civilised society and it is rare in underdeveloped countries. Lack of physical exercise, a diet high in fats, heavy smoking and the stress of modern living have all been blamed and it is probable that one or more of these factors is responsible in part.

Cancer of the Lung is another of these modern epidemics. In 1972 7,000 people were killed or died as the result of road accidents, but Lung Cancer killed 31,000 men and women. We do know what is responsible for the majority of cases of Lung Cancer; that is heavy cigarette smoking.

Smoking tobacco, whether cigarette, cigar, or pipe has three main effects on man. Firstly there is the Nicotine content which acts as a Narcotic. The more people that are "hooked" on Nicotine, the harder it is for them to give up smoking.

Then there is the tar content which causes irritation to the lungs and besides bringing on Lung Cancer, it can cause Chronic Bronchitis.

Finally there is carbon monoxide which is produced by the actual burning of the tobacco. This has an asphyxiating effect which is now known to damage the heart.

Smoking therefore is a very dangerous habit.

Full details of various aspects of Environmental Health will be found in the pages that follow.

I would especially draw your attention to the details about Housing on pages 9 and 10.

Housing is one of the most important factors in the promotion of health. It is extremely difficult if not impossible to rear bonny babies in substandard homes.

At the other end of the age scale, an elderly person can enjoy the remaining years of life in comfort and remain independent for much longer if he or she has a home with modern amenities.

In conclusion I should like to thank the Chairman and Members of the Council for their support during the past year.

I am most grateful to Mr. Brown, Public Health Inspector for the conscientious and enthusiastic way in which he has carried out his duties. My thanks are also due to the Clerk, Officers and Staff of the Council for their assistance at various times.

I am,

Yours faithfully,

K. M. Harding.

GENERAL STATISTICS

Area	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1,696	acres
Population (estimated mid-year Home Population, Registrar General's Figures)	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	8,870	
Inhabited Houses	....	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3,190	
Rateable Value	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	£471,164	
Estimated Sum represented by a penny rate	....	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	£4,650	

VITAL STATISTICS

		Males	Females	Total	England and Wales Total
<u>Live Births:</u>	Total	62	55	117	725,405
	Legitimate	59	54	113	662,907
	Illegitimate	3	1	4	62,498
<u>Stillbirths:</u>	Total	-	1	1	8,794
	Legitimate	-	1	1	7,846
	Illegitimate	-	-	-	948
<u>Total live and still births:</u>	Total	62	56	118	734,199
	Legitimate	59	55	114	670,753
	Illegitimate	3	1	4	63,446
<u>Deaths of Infants under 1 year of age:</u>	Total	1	-	1	12,494
	Legitimate	1	-	1	11,177
	Illegitimate	-	-	-	1,317
<u>Deaths of Infants under 4 weeks of age:</u>	Total	1	-	1	8,373
	Legitimate	1	-	1	7,503
	Illegitimate	-	-	-	870
<u>Deaths of Infants under 1 week of age:</u>	Total	1	-	1	7,142
	Legitimate	1	-	1	6,365
	Illegitimate	-	-	-	777
<u>Deaths - all ages:</u>		47	42	89	591,907

VITAL STATISTICS (Continued)

	Stowmarket Urban District	England and Wales
<u>Live birth rates, etc.</u>		
Live births per 1,000 home population (crude rate)	13.2	14.8
Area comparability factor	1.03	1.00
Local adjusted rate	13.6	14.8
Ratio of local adjusted rate to national rate	.92	1.00
Illegitimate live births as percentage of all live births	3	9
<u>Stillbirth rate</u>		
Stillbirths per 1,000 total live and still births.	8	12
<u>Infant Mortality Rates</u>		
Deaths under 1 year per 1,000 legitimate live births	9	17
Deaths of legitimate infants under 1 year per 1,000 legitimate live births	9	17
Deaths of illegitimate infants under 1 year per 1,000 illegitimate live births	-	21
Neonatal mortality rate:		
Deaths under 4 weeks per 1,000 live births	9	12
Early neonatal mortality rate:		
Deaths under 1 week per 1,000 live births	9	10
Perinatal mortality rate:		
Stillbirths and deaths under 1 week com- bined per 1,000 total live and still births	17	22
Deaths per 1,000 home population (crude rate)	10.1	12.1
Area comparability factor	.93	1.00
Local adjusted rate	9.3	12.1
Ratio of local adjusted rate to national rate	.77	1.00

CAUSES OF DEATH

	<u>M</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>1972</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>1971</u>
Late effects of respiratory T.B.	-	-	-	1
Malignant Neoplasms - Stomach	-	2	2	4
" " - Intestine	2	-	2	4
" " - Larynx	-	-	-	1
" " - Lung, bronchus	3	1	4	6
" " - Breast	-	2	2	-
Other Malignant Neoplasms	2	1	3	3
Diabetes Mellitus	-	1	1	-
Other Diseases of the Nervous System	-	1	1	1
Chronic Rheumatic heart disease	-	-	-	2
Hypertensive disease	3	-	3	3
Ischaemic heart disease	21	12	33	27
Other forms of heart disease	2	2	4	2
Cerebrovascular disease	3	8	11	13
Other diseases of circulatory system	-	2	2	2
Pneumonia	7	3	10	8
Influenza	-	1	1	-
Bronchitis and emphysema	-	-	-	3
Intestinal obstruction and hernia	1	-	1	-
Other diseases of digestive system	-	1	1	1
Nephritis and Nephrosis	-	-	-	1
Diseases of musculo-skeletal system	1	2	3	-
Birth injury, difficult labour etc.	1	-	1	-
Congenital anomalies	-	-	-	2
Other causes of perinatal mortality	-	-	-	2
Symptoms and ill-defined conditions	-	1	1	-
All other accidents	-	1	1	3
Suicide and self-inflicted injuries	1	1	2	1
Other other external causes	-	-	-	1
<hr/>				
<u>TOTALS:</u>	47	42	89	91
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COMPARATIVE TABLE FOR THE LAST FOUR YEARS

	1969	1970	1971	1972	England and Wales 1972
Inhabited houses	3002	3015	3090	3190	-
Population (Registrar General's figures)	8430	8630	8710	8870	49,028,900
Live Births	127	112	121	117	725,405
Standardised Birth Rate per 1,000 population	16.2	13.9	14.9	13.2	14.8
Deaths of Infants under one year	3	3	3	1	12,494
Infant Mortality Rate per 1,000 Live Births	24	27	25	9	17.0
Standardised Death Rate per 1,000 population	11.8	10.0	9.3	10.0	12.1

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES (Excluding Tuberculosis) - Compiled
from Notifications received

Diseases	Ages							Total	Admitted to Hospital	Deaths
	1/2	3/4	5/9	10/14	15/24	25 +	Age Unknown			
Measles	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Whooping Cough	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Infective Jaundice	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-
							<u>TOTALS:</u>	3	-	-

TUBERCULOSIS

- (i) One new pulmonary case was notified during the year.
- (ii) One pulmonary case was removed from the Register during the year on his death.
- (iii) Cases on the Register at the end of the year:-

<u>Pulmonary</u>			<u>Non-Pulmonary</u>		
<u>M.</u>	<u>F.</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>M.</u>	<u>F.</u>	<u>Total</u>
2	-	2	-	-	-

VACCINATIONS AND IMMUNISATIONS (Figures supplied by the County Medical Officer of Health)

1970 1971 1972

1. IMMUNISATIONS

(a) Primary

Tetanus	...	...	...	...	32	9	53
Diphtheria/Tetanus	...	...	...	...	1	2	-
Diphtheria/Tetanus/							
Whooping Cough	...	...	...	...	77	132	76

110 143 129

(b) Boosters

Tetanus	...	...	...	...	78	85	53
Diphtheria/Tetanus	...	...	...	...	82	174	59
Diphtheria/Tetanus/							
Whooping Cough	47	5	-

207 264 112

2. POLIOMYELITIS

(a) Primary

Oral vaccine	78	135	192
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(b) Boosters

Oral vaccine	143	232	58
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<u>3. MEASLES</u>	161	176	121
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<u>4. RUBELLA</u>	45	Nil	17
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SECTION 47 OF THE NATIONAL ASSISTANCE ACT 1948

No action was required to hospitalise any elderly or chronically sick person during the year.

HEALTH SERVICES IN THE DISTRICT

(a) Clinic Services

The County Council's new Health Centre is situated in Violet Hill Road, and affords a wide variety of services.

An Infant Welfare Clinic is held each Wednesday, 1.30 - 4.00 p.m.

Mothercraft and relaxation classes are available twice a month on the first and third Tuesday afternoons.

Speech therapy sessions are held each Tuesday.

Family planning advice is available on Mondays and Thursdays.

Ophthalmic clinic sessions take place on the first and third Wednesday mornings each month.

The Dental Clinic operates as necessary.

A Diabetes Clinic is held once a month on the fourth Friday morning at 11.0 a.m.

A Chiropody Service is available on Monday afternoons.

Mentally handicapped day-centre sessions are held every Monday.

(b) Home Nursing

There are two district nurse/midwives working in Stowmarket.

(c) Home Helps

The County Council's Home Help Organiser arranges for home helps to be made available in approved cases. The service is principally available to the elderly and disabled to enable them to maintain their independence in their homes as an alternative to possible hospitalisation. The problem family, the mother after confinement, and the family with the temporary loss of its housewife and mother are others in the categories recognised for home help service, in order to ease their burden during a temporary period of stress.

(d) Health Visiting

Two Health Visitors serve Stowmarket under the County Council's scheme. They are actively engaged in promoting the welfare of the family, and their especial interests are the less able, the pre-school age, the physically handicapped and the problem family.

(e) Laboratory Facilities

The Council utilises the services of the Public Health Laboratory Service for the bacteriological examination work which forms an essential part of the Department's duties.

(f) Venereal Diseases Clinic

Anyone who has risk

(f) Venereal Diseases Clinic

Anyone who has risked infection, and any extra-marital sexual relationship constitutes this risk, should use the discreet services of the Venereal Diseases Clinic, which are equipped for reliable diagnosis and speedy and convenient treatment. Two such Clinics are available to the local population as follows:-

(i) Ipswich and East Suffolk Hospital (Skin Dept.), Anglesea Road Wing, Ipswich

Males: Mondays 5.30 p.m. - 7.30 p.m.
Fridays 1.00 p.m. - 2.30 p.m.

Females: Mondays 7.30 p.m. - 8.30 p.m.
Tuesdays 2.00 p.m. - 4.00 p.m.
Fridays 3.30 p.m. - 5.30 p.m.

(ii) West Suffolk General Hospital, Bury St. Edmunds

Males and Females: Wednesdays 9.30 a.m. onwards.

HOUSING

(a) New Dwellings

Dwellings completed by private enterprise	...	...	...	...	...	41
Dwellings completed by the Council	...	...	...	...	...	24

(b) Grant-aided Private House Improvement

(i) Standard Grant Scheme

Applications approved in respect of owner-occupied dwellings	14
Applications approved in respect of tenanted dwellings	Nil
Owner-occupied dwellings improved	8
Tenanted dwellings improved	3
Amount paid in grant aid	£2,954

(ii) Discretionary Improvement Grant Scheme

Applications approved in respect of owner-occupied dwellings	13
Applications approved in respect of tenanted dwellings	1
Applications approved in respect of speculative developers	4
Owner-occupied dwellings improved	5
Tenanted dwellings improved	1
Amount paid in grant aid	£3,226

(c) Qualification Certificates

The grant of these certificates, enabling the conversion of a controlled tenancy to a regulated tenancy and the registration of a fair rent, is dependent upon the property being fit, in reasonable order and possessing standard grant scheme amenities.

The following action was taken in 1972:

Applications made for qualification certificates	3
Applications approved	1
Applications refused	2
Applications made following compliance with repairs notices	2
Applications approved	2

(d) House Repair

Little action was required by the Council in connection with tenant complaints relating to house disrepairs during the year. All matters were resolved by informal action.

(e) Sub-Standard House Clearance Programme

In recent years, considerable inroads have been made into the Council's programme which was formulated in 1955 and has been added to from time to time.

There are currently 62 dwellings still requiring attention. Of these, some may well wait for attention in connection with the relief road works (refer Stowmarket folklore), others deserve clearance and the provision of alternative fit housing as soon as the Council's rehousing resources permit and others, with the aid of grants, may well be renovated for a further period of useful life.

Apart from those dwellings still to be attended to and thereby providing a prolonged anxiety for both owner and occupant alike, the following dwellings which have been attended to remain standing at the year's end:

No. of flats subject to Closing Orders	4
No. of dwellings subject to Closing Orders	21
No. of dwellings subject to Demolition Orders	4
No. of dwellings subject to Clearance Orders	24
No. of dwellings subject to Suspended Clearance Order	4
No. of unfit Council houses voluntarily closed	10

Of the above 17 were destined to be renovated with the aid of grants.

Whilst it is necessary to apply the standards of the Housing Acts to ensure fitness of dwellings for the good of the occupant, the tools of demolition or closure cannot be used in isolation. They require to be dove-tailed to the rehousing resources of the Council and, where more appropriate, the grant-aid schemes available to facilitate renovation where justified. It was encouraging to see appropriate houses being prepared for renovation at the year's end. During the year the following properties were the subject of action:-

Undertakings to not relet accepted:	3
Demolition Orders made:	1
Closing Orders made:	3
Clearance Orders confirmed (10 dwellings)	2
Clearance Order submitted for confirmation (4 dwellings)	1
No. of dwellings demolished.	11
No. of Closing Orders revoked.	1

FOOD(a) General

No. of food premises in the district	117
Bread and cake retailers	4
Butchers	6
Canteens (school, factory etc)	15
Caterers	9
Chemists	3
General provision retailers	27
Fish friers	6
Fruiterers	7
Market stallholders	6
Meat products manufacturers	2
Publicans	17
Slaughterhouse operator	1
Sweet confectionery retailers	8
Wet fish merchant	1
Wholesalers	4
Wine merchant	1
No. of retailers registered as milk distributors	16
No. of premises registered for:-	
(i) storage and sale of ice cream	29
(ii) meat products manufacture	12
(iii) fish frying	5

(b) Unfit or Poor Quality Food Complaints

No. of complaints received	10
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Subjects of the complaints were as follows:-

- (i) Glass fragment in a jar of pickled onions.
- (ii) A length of string in a chipolata sausage.
- (iii) A length of human hair in a jar of mixed pickles.
- (iv) An orange coloured "rubber band" in a bottle of fruit squash.
This was found to be a congealed ring of fruit oil and fruit fibre.
- (v) Thawed state of a consignment of 'frozen' seafood delivered to a local vendor dealing in frozen foods.
- (vi) A natural parasitic worm in a piece of fried fish.
- (vii) Corrosion of the interior of a can of baby food.
- (viii) Strand of hessian bakery mitten in a sliced bread loaf.
- (ix) Piece of vegetable leaf adhering to the inside of a milk bottle.
- (x) House moth larva in a packet of breakfast cereal.

In all cases, the complaints were thoroughly investigated with a view to determining whether the complaint was justified, and where confirmed, action was taken to ascertain the circumstances of each individual incident, and steps were taken to warn those at fault and prevent a recurrence where appropriate.

In only two cases, that of (i) and (vii) was there cause for real concern. In the former proceedings were not appropriate and in the latter were not possible because of the absence of evidence necessary to support a case.

One prosecution was made by the Council following the sale of a mouldy pie at the latter end of the previous year. The vendor was fined £10 for the sale of the pie that was clearly marked out of date by the manufacturer's coding.

(c) Food Quality and Adulteration

Not only the Council's Public Health Department, but also the County Council's Weights and Measures Inspectorate undertakes surveillance of food supplies and the Weights and Measures Inspector has kindly supplied the following details concerning his Department's work in Stowmarket during the year:

<u>Sample</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Incorrect</u>
Baby Foods	1	
Beverages	5	
Biscuits	3	
Drugs	3	
Eggs	2	
Flour Confectionery	2	
Ice Cream	2	
Intoxicating Liquor	2	
Meat and Meat Products	15	1
Preserves	2	
Soft Drinks	5	
Sugar Confectionery	2	
Tinned Fruit	5	1
Vegetables	1	
—	—	—
	50	2
—	—	—

One of the incorrect samples related to the labelling of a can of "Chicken Supreme with Rice". This label was subsequently amended by the canners. The other related to cans of "Prunes in Syrup" which were found to have a tin content of 500 ppm. (twice the recommended maximum level). It was decided to institute proceedings against the canners on this occasion, and they were subsequently fined £40 and ordered to pay £6.55 costs at the Stowmarket Magistrates Court.

(d) Slaughterhouses

The slaughterhouse of Messrs. W. H. Aldis & Son at 47 Bury Street, closed on expiry of the licence in May of the year.

WATER SUPPLIES

Mains water supplies in the District are provided by the Ipswich Corporation Water Undertaking.

Of the 3190 dwellings, all but two are served by mains supplies. One dwelling, due for attention in the Council's slum clearance programme, is without a proper water supply and 10 dwellings are supplied by standpipes.

The Water Authority has effected a major improvement to local supplies by abandoning the physically unsatisfactory water supplies from the Poplar Hill bore and introducing a new supply into the Combs area of the District. The old water supply, heavily laden with an unacceptable high iron content had distressed the residents of the area for many years and caused the housewives in particular a great deal of extra work and anxiety. The Water Authority is to be commended for such a worthwhile improvement.

47 samples of local mains water supply were taken for bacteriological examination during the year and all proved of satisfactory quality.

DRAINAGE AND SANITATION

42 dwellings were not connected to the Town's main sewerage network for treatment at the Council's modern and efficient sewage disposal works.

Of the 42, one has since been connected to the sewer and two properties have now been demolished.

Of the remainder, only four appear to give rise to concern over the sanitary arrangements and these are likely to receive attention in the near future when it is anticipated that a sewer will be made available to them.

During the year the Combs beck was even more heavily polluted by tannery waste liquor. The degree and frequency of this long-standing contamination, which has grieved the residents of the Combs Ford area of our District, became such that the Council made even stronger representations and initiated action which is destined to return this beck to its intended state as a natural watercourse.

It is customary for the annual report of the East Suffolk and Norfolk River Authority to comment favourably on the effluent discharged by the Council's sewage works. The Gipping carries a greater volume of effluent relative to natural flow than other rivers in the area and quality of effluent is obviously that much more important particularly in recent drier years. The Stowmarket works is reported by the Board to have consistently produced excellent effluent. The maltings factory downstream has also improved the quality of its effluent into the river and fish are now occupying this stretch of the river. In fact the Board's report observes that fish are now found in the entire River Gipping for the first time in at least 100 years. From whatever angle one looks at this new situation it is environmentally very satisfactory indeed.

PEST CONTROL

The Council affords domestic householders a free service for the elimination of rats and mice and offers a service to commercial and industrial concerns for an all-in charge of 80p per hour.

Wasps, as a general hazard to both individual and community health and safety are also dealt with free. Flea infestations, when appropriate, are attended to on a cost/materials basis and the Department will also advise on other pests problems ranging from carpet beetle to pigeon problems.

The Council has the services of a part-time Rodent Operative who is both conscientious and skilled and the following summarises the work he undertook during the year.

No. of properties inspected following complaint:	140
No. infested by rats:	91
No. infested by mice:	46
No. of properties inspected for rats and mice on survey:	230
No. infested by rats:	77
No. infested by mice:	25

WORKPLACES

(a) Rag Flock & Other Filling Materials Act 1951

No. of registered premises:	1
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(b) Scrap Metal Dealers Act 1964

No. of registered dealers	2
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(c) Offices, Shops & Railway Premises Act 1963

The Council shares the administration of the Offices, Shops & Railway Premises Act 1963 with H.M. Factories Inspectorate and the Fire Authority.

The Department of Employment and H.M. Factories Inspectorate deserve particular mention for the considerable help and advice they afford local authorities in providing guidance and aids to assist authorities in putting into practical effect the intent and purpose of the Act and its regulations.

The following summarises the situation in 1972:

TABLE A REGISTRA- TIONS AND GENERAL INSPEC- TIONS	Class of Premises	No. of premises registered during the year.	Total No. of regis- tered premises at the end of year.	No. of regis- tered prems. receiving a general inspection during the year.
				TOTALS:
	Offices	1	37	12
	Retail Shops	1	75	55
	Wholesale Shops, ware houses	-	5	3
	Catering establish- ments open to the public, canteens.	-	8	7
	Fuel storage depots	-	2	2
		2	127	79

TABLE B - NO. OF VISITS OF ALL KINDS TO
REGISTERED PREMISES:

104

TABLE C ANALYSIS OF PERSONS EMPLOYED IN REGIS- TERED PREMISES BY WORK- PLACE	Class of workplace	Number of persons employed		
			TOTAL:	
	Offices	278		
	Retail Shops	446		
	Wholesale Departments, warehouses	25		
	Catering establishments open to the public	54		
	Canteens	3		
	Fuel Storage Depots	14		
			TOTAL:	820
			TOTAL MALES:	352
			TOTAL FEMALES:	468

Two non-fatal accidents were notified in 1972 in accordance with the Act.

